

REMARKS:

In the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-21. Claim 8 are amended herein. No new matter is presented. Thus, claims 1-21 are pending and under consideration. The rejections are traversed below.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 112:

Claims 3, 4, 10, 11, 17 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 as being unclear. In particular, the Examiner indicates that the relationship between the first appearance frequency in the dependent claims and the appearance frequency in the independent claims is unclear.

Applicants respectfully submit that the languages of the claims convey to one of ordinary skill the art that "a first appearance frequency of said search word in said documents including said search word" in claim 3 describes "an appearance frequency of said search word" in claim 1, upon which claim 3 depends. Similarly, the relationship between "a first appearance frequency of said extracted synonym in said documents including said extracted synonym" and "an appearance frequency of said extracted synonym" is clear that the first appearance frequency describes the appearance frequency of the synonym.

Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §101:

Claims 8-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter.

The invention of claim 8 is directed to "A search program embodied on a computer-readable storage medium causing a computer to perform operations", which is directed to a statutory subject matter.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that because independent claim 8 and dependent claims dependent therefrom satisfy the requirements of 35 USC §101, withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102(b):

Claims 1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 12, 15, 17 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by EAST Text Searching, published January 2000 (East).

The claimed invention executes a search using both a search word included in a search condition and a synonym of the word.

Independent claim 1 recites, "extracting a synonym of said search word from a synonym file" and "obtaining evaluation data of said search word, which is at least either of a score based on an appearance frequency of said search word and a number of documents including said search word and evaluation data of the extracted synonym, which is at least either of a score based on an appearance frequency of said extracted synonym and a number of documents including said extracted synonym."

The claimed search method of claim 1 includes, "presenting said user with said search word, said extracted synonym, said evaluation data of said search word, and said evaluation data of said extracted synonym in a manner in which said search word and synonym are selectable", "accepting data representing a search word selected by said user or data representing a synonym selected by said user" and "presenting said user with data concerning an identified document including the selected search word or the selected synonym."

Similarly, claims 8 and 15 recite, extracting "a synonym of said search word from a synonym file", obtaining "evaluation data of said search word... and evaluation data of the extracted synonym" and presenting "said user with said search word, said extracted synonym, said evaluation data of said search word, and said evaluation data of said extracted synonym in a manner... selectable." In response to the user's selection, the claimed invention presents "said user with data concerning an identified document including the selected search word or the selected synonym."

The Examiner appears to imply that the extracted search term on page 45 of East is equivalent to the claimed "synonym." However, page 45 of East is limited to displaying a set of a search terms and a total number of hits in which the search terms are selectable, where it is clear to one skilled in the art that each of the extracted search terms "Three", "dimensional", "Jigsaw" and "puzzle" in East are not a synonym of the other extracted search term, and neither is each of "Toyota" and "Engine" (see, page 45).

On page 18, East discusses preferred thesaurus and dictionary for specifying an index to be searched. However, East does not teach or suggest presenting the user with an option of selecting the object of the search based on a search word entered by the user, as taught by the invention.

East does not teach or suggest the above-identified features each and every element as set forth in the independent claims including presenting the user with "said extracted synonym" and "said evaluation data of said extracted synonym in a manner in which said search word and

said extracted are selectable" (see above discussion of independent claims).

It is submitted that the independent claims are patentable over East.

For at least the above-mentioned reasons, claims depending from the independent claims are patentably distinguishable over East. The dependent claims are also independently patentable. For example, as recited in claim 5, "judging whether said evaluation data of said search word and of said extracted synonym satisfies a predetermined condition" and "presenting said search word or said extracted synonym [that satisfy the condition]... in a state indicating being pre-selected" and those that do not satisfy the condition "in a state indicating being unselected" (see also, claims 12 and 19 that recite similar features).

For example, as illustrated in Fig. 10, checks are set in the checkboxes indicating the search word or synonym "whose evaluation data satisfies said predetermined condition" and checks are not set in the checkboxes indicating the search word or synonym "whose evaluation data does not satisfy said predetermined condition." EAST does not teach or suggest these features of claims 5, 12 and 19.

Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103(a):

Claims 2, 6, 7, 9, 13, 14, 16, 20 and 21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over East in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,692,176 (Holt), and claims 4, 11 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over East, Holt and U.S. Patent Pub. No. 2004/0068396 (Kawatani).

The above arguments distinguishing the independent claims from East are incorporated herein to address claims depending from these independent claims.

Holt discusses distinguishing between noise words, which are not provided in an index for the documents such as the word "of", and frequently used terms that are provided in the index but which are not used in the search (see, col. 2, lines 19-20 and col. 4, line 66 through col. 5, line 4).

However, Holt does not teach or suggest, "extracting a search word from a sentence as a search condition by a morphological analysis" (see, claims 2, 9 and 16), "predetermined condition" including number of documents of "said extracted synonym" (see, claims 6, 13 and 20), and presenting the user with data of documents including appearance of "said selected synonym... in order of values calculated" (see, claims 7, 14 and 21).

On the other hand, Kawatani is directed to detecting terms occurring in a document input, segmenting and determining occurrence frequencies of the terms occurring in the document segments (see, paragraphs 30 and 60).

Claim 4 recites obtaining evaluation data of the search word and synonym thereof by calculating a score based on appearance frequency of the search word and the synonym using "first" and "second" appearance frequency of both the search word and the extracted synonym (see also, claims 11 and 18).

The cited references do not teach or suggest the above cited features of claims.

Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

WITHDRAWAL OF FINALITY:

As discussed above, each of the independent claims are allowable over the cited references, and therefore, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejection and withdrawal of the finality of the Office Action.

ENTRY OF AMENDMENT:

Applicants respectfully request entry of the claim amendment(s) because the amendment was made for clarification and does not introduce significant changes requiring further search.

CONCLUSION:


There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited. If there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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